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TAGS: [KGHG](#) [UNSC](#) [UNGA](#) [SENV](#) [AORC](#)  
SUBJECT: PACIFIC ISLANDS ELABORATE ON DRAFT GA RESOLUTION  
ON CLIMATE CHANGE, HEAR USG VIEWS

REF: A. SECSTATE 82276  
[1](#)B. USUN NEW YORK 681

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Summary  
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[1](#)1. (SBU) Eight Pacific states described in a July 31 meeting with USUN their desire for Security Council engagement on climate change, specifically to acknowledge its linkage to peace and security. They recognize the risks involved, but believe the upside worth it given that traditional UN fora and "business as usual" has not produced adequate attention to their concerns. USUN pledged to work with them to achieve a constructive result, but argued that options other than the UNSC have yet to be exhausted. By prematurely seeking UNSC engagement, the Pacific states could only put at risk their own interests. The Pacific representatives noted their draft resolution has encountered reservations, but has not yet met significant opposition. They said they would report their finding to the Pacific leaders who meet in a summit later in August in Niue. End summary.

[1](#)2. (U) Deputy PermRep Wolff and ECOSOC Ambassador McMahan received on July 31 a delegation of Pacific Island PermReps (PRs) to discuss their draft General Assembly (GA) resolution (reftels) calling on the Security Council (UNSC) to address the "peace and security implications" of climate change. Papua New Guinea PR Aisi chaired the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) delegation in light of the hospitalization of Palau PR Beck, "our leader in this endeavor." Also attending were the PRs of Micronesia, Fiji, Tuvalu, Samoa, Vanuatu and the Marshall Islands, and a notetaker from the Mission of Tonga.

Motivations and Intent  
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[1](#)3. (SBU) Each of the PSIDS PermReps offered their mutually supporting views on why their draft resolution was both appropriate and timely. In summary, they pointed out that every other relevant UN organ and Convention body has spoken on climate change, including the Human Rights Council, but the UNSC remains noticeably absent. While a UNSC discussion took place in April 2007, there was no outcome document such as a Presidential Statement (PRST). The PSIDS want UNSC engagement not merely to 'check the box,' but because the UNSC is capable of taking action, such as forming a standing committee as it has on counter-terrorism issues. Acknowledging concerns of UNSC "encroachment" on GA issues, the PSIDS defended their draft resolution as "starting and

ending with the General Assembly," and emphasized its brevity and simplicity. The linkage between climate change and peace and security will inevitably become a higher-profile issue for the UNSC, in the PSIDS' view, and they want the UN to face that reality now. The Fiji PR underscored, "This issue will not disappear." They also see the UNSC as a venue wherein particular attention can be paid to the small island states, since their concerns are not given such priority attention within the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

14. (SBU) The PSIDS representatives repeatedly came back to the point of wanting demonstrable UNSC engagement on climate change, and, specifically, an explicit recognition by the UNSC of the linkage between climate change and peace and security.

#### Constructive Engagement

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15. (SBU) DPR Wolff thanked the PSIDS for their coherent and compelling case, underscoring many points of convergence with the U.S. view and emphasizing our long-standing ties to their states. Drawing on ref A points, he urged the PSIDS to consider how to maximize UN effectiveness in achieving their goals. U.S. reading of the UNSC is that it remains divided and lacking in consensus on how it might address climate change, meaning that any discussion there at this time would inevitably devolve into extraneous debates and likely sap momentum from UNFCCC negotiations by interjecting new and divisive concepts. The DPR urged the PSIDS to consider a

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different strategy, first showing they have exhausted other avenues, such as the UNFCCC and the General Assembly, using the UNSC only as a last recourse. The UNSC's P5 prefer to only take action when they can be constructive, and that is not yet the case. Ambassador McMahan underscored our common concern not to lose momentum in global processes like the UNFCCC, and pledged to work closely with the PSIDS to find the best way to approach their core interests.

#### Going for Broke

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16. (SBU) PR Aisi acknowledged the U.S. concerns and the fact that their effort to bring climate change to the UNSC is a gamble. That said, the PSIDS could not accept "business as usual" and were therefore willing to take the risk, saying their effort could either further muddy the waters or actually provide new impetus. In their consultations thus far with other delegations, the PSIDS have detected "hesitation" from some states, but no "opposition." DPR Wolff countered sympathetically but frankly that, based on his knowledge of the UNSC, the PSIDS were making a losing bet. He said he could imagine the PSIDS taking this step had the UNFCCC process failed already, but given that it has not, the PSIDS action could only threaten that process, which could not be in their best interests. Asked if the PSIDS thought the upcoming 63rd General Assembly could help address their concerns, they replied that the incoming GA President shows no sign of being more active or likely to achieve results than the outgoing President.

#### Further Consultations

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17. (SBU) DPR Wolff pledged to reflect carefully on the PSIDS points and urged them to do likewise. Given that the PSIDS had yet to consult with the majority of other UNSC members, DPR Wolff invited further consultations once that had been done to collaborate on how best to go forward. PR Aisi expressed warm thanks for the meeting, explaining that they will summarize and transmit the viewpoints they have heard to their leaders, who will have a summit meeting later in August in Niue. He expected a political decision to be made there

on how to go forward. PR Aisi also noted that a senior U.S. representative, such as A/S Hill, typically participates in a partners meeting on the margins of that summit.

Comment

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18. (SBU) This meeting successfully underscored U.S. engagement and cooperation with the Pacific Islands' missions in New York, helping to preserve our equities in future UN negotiations. The PSIDS seem to have understood that their current tactics might not be the best way to achieve their desired outcome, and that the frank and informed judgment of the U.S. is worth seeking. The meeting also helped reveal a core PSIDS goal of getting a UNSC reference to climate change, and the fact that such a reference could be achieved without recourse to a GA resolution. The UNSC's annual report to the GA, for instance, is currently in the process of negotiation. End comment.  
Wolff